

Agenda

Veterans Affairs Commission

Monday, March 20 2006
3:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Municipal Plaza Bldg., "B" Room
114 W. Commerce

VAC Chairman Erik Frederick, Chair

VAC Members: Roy Lee, Karen S. Rankin, Irvin L. Padgett, Manuel S. Perez, Bob Murdock, Richard Holgin, Daniel Delgado
(3 vacancies for Districts 3,7&10)

VAC Liaisons: Carmelina R. Davis, Economic Development Dept. VAC Technical Advisors: Craig Erickson, Bexar County

Agenda Topics

3:00 P.M. Call To Order Erik Frederick, Chair

- I. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Citizens to be Heard
- III. Approval of the Minutes – 2/17/06

New Business

- IV. Election of Chair for Finance Committee
- V. Disclosure Statements
- VI. Other Business

Old Business

- VII. Medal of Honor Memorial
- VIII. Purple Heart Recipient Ceremony
- IX. National Association of the Order of the Purple Heart
- X. Veterans Disability Benefits Commission Hearing
- XI. Veterans Service Officers/Counselors Meeting
- XII. Other Business

Adjournment

Next Meeting: 4/17/06 at 3:00 p.m.

COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

Minutes

Friday, February 17, 2006, 10:30 a.m.

Municipal Plaza, "C" Room, 114 W. Commerce

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

Erik Frederick, Chair
Roy Lee
Richard Holgin
Irvin L. Padgett
Manuel Perez
Bob Murdock

ABSENT

Karen Rankin
Richard Gonzales, Jr.
Reuben G. Salas
Ralph Zendejas
Edward Lavin

CITY STAFF:

Phil Hardberger, Mayor, City of San Antonio
Councilman, Roger Flores
James LeFlore, COSA, Design Enhancements
Ron Smudy, COSA, Parks & Recreation
Laura Cabanilla-Cruz, City Council District 1
Ed Davis, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Walter Ague, Economic Development Department
Carmelina R. Davis, Economic Development Department

OTHER AGENCIES & GUESTS:

Cliff Walker, Congressman Cuellar's Office
Craig Erickson, Bexar County

I. Call to Order

Mr. Erik Frederick, VAC Acting Chair, called the monthly meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Members, staff, and guests recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Citizens to be Heard

Craig Erickson, Bexar County, informed the VAC about the various burials that would transpire. He informed the VAC that the Purple Heart approached the County to locate memorial pavers. He added that in light of the results from the earlier meeting with the Mayor regarding the proposed location for the Medal of

Honor memorial and similar requests, he would inform the County Commissioners of the new developments for reconsideration.

IV. Minutes

The VAC members reviewed the January 17, 2006 minutes. Mr. Holgin motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Frederick seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

V. New Business

Introduction of New Officers

There was a vote to approve a Resolution for the VAC Officers: Mr. Frederick and Mr. Lee as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Mr. Murdock motioned to approve and was seconded by Mr. Holgin. The motion was unanimously approved.

Purple Heart Recipient Ceremony

Ms. Davis informed the VAC that Councilwoman Patti Radle and Fort Sam Houston had informed staff about an individual named Jesus Gonzales Vega who was a recent recipient of the Purple Heart for wounds received in Korea in 1951. They were looking to staff to help coordinate a ceremony for Mr. Vega. The ceremony is scheduled for March 17, 2006 at 10:30 a.m. in the front steps of City Hall, with a General from Fort Sam making the presentation. A small reception will be held for Mr. Vega sponsored by the VAC and the press will be notified via a News Release.

VI. Old Business

Recommendations for Medal of Honor Memorial (MOH)

Mr. Frederick commented on the fine meeting that was held earlier with the Mayor on the discussion regarding the Medal of Honor Memorial and suggested a recap of the meeting.

Mr. Lee said that there was nothing new that had been introduced, but that it was a matter of expediting the ideas that were presented.

Mr. Murdock commented that the Mayor wanted to exclude the recipients that just entered the service in San Antonio and persons who were not a resident of San Antonio and buried at Fort Sam from the criteria.

Mr. Frederick said that it was clear that the Mayor wanted to include those that at some point reflected San Antonio as their home of record.

Mr. Murdock acknowledged Mr. Holgin for all the work to compile the report he presented to the Mayor.

Mr. Frederick stated that although they had proposed other areas, the Mayor's idea of selecting the Municipal Auditorium strictly for veterans' memorials was something that the VAC was willing to support.

It was suggested that Mr. Holgin meet with Councilman Flores and provide an update at the next meeting.

Ms. Davis added that it was stated that groups would be formed for i.e., planning, finance, etc., and that it would be a good idea to include a VAC member in those meetings.

Mr. Frederick reminded Mr. Murdock of Mr. Davis' suggestion to call some of the retired generals and also to get them involved in the press conference. He added that it was obvious that the Mayor wanted the VAC to move forward with the project. He mentioned the design competition and needing to find out how to proceed.

Jim LeFlor, from Public Works, responded by saying that a team would have to be formed to outline the project scope/project definition and work with the departments that are involved with the Municipal Plaza for their input on design and funds required. He added that this and other information would be reported back to the VAC in the future. He also said that when Mr. Holgin speaks to Councilman Flores, he needs to acquire the direction he wants to take and that he could also appoint representatives.

Disabled Veteran's Parking Issue

Mr. Frederick informed the VAC that the City has drafted a letter to the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) regarding the disabled veteran who was issued a parking citation for not having the right decal. The TVC responded by calling to thank the VAC for the research performed and acknowledged their concern and agreed with their deductions. They were going to send a statewide and nationwide news release on the matter requiring attention.

Ms. Davis informed the VAC that she had forwarded the information to Trey Jacobson from the Mayor's Office, as he had been initially contacted by the veteran, so that he could relay the response from TVC.

Mr. Murdock said that we needed to contact our State Legislators to amend the law, if required. He added the Ms. Rankin could keep the VAC updated on this.

Mr. Lee said that a Purple Heart recipient would not be able to park in a disabled parking space, but was expected to make an additional expense to acquire a blue disability parking decal. He said that administrative correction was needed.

National Association of the Order of the Purple Heart

Mr. Frederick said that the VAC had explored every possibility to find a location for the relocation of the National Association of the Order of the Purple Heart headquarters. Ms. Davis informed the VAC that although Councilman Perez was trying to assist, the real decision-makers for finding space would be the entity where the space was being considered, i.e. Kelly, Brooks, Sunset Station, etc. She indicated the difficulty in acquiring free space for the Association. She added that Brooks only had one commercial building available because the military occupied the rest of the space and timing was off. She added that the building required extensive improvements including air-conditioning.

Mr. Clifton Walker from Congressman Cuellar's Office said that he had spoken to someone from Brooks that indicated that approximately \$30,000 was needed to renovate the building. He added that he spoke to Laura Cruz, from Councilman Perez' office, and she said that if Veterans Plaza was proposed for memorials, space permitting, it would be a natural fit for the Association. He said that he proposed asking the Commission for some funds towards this effort.

Ms. Davis informed Mr. Walker that the bid for office relocation was already awarded to Oklahoma, but that there was a division amongst the Association of where the offices should be located. She said that various concerns were raised of an actual commitment if space was identified, as to who would pay for the leasehold improvements and who would be willing to provide free rent.

Ms. Davis said that staff was in the midst of having a meeting with Kelly and would continue to pursue all avenues. Ms. Davis asked Mr. Walker if the Congressman was aware of all the details discussed and asked for his suggestions on how to proceed. Mr. Walker said that they were not aware of some things discussed, but that they were receiving similar calls from the Association.

Mr. Frederick said that staff needed to inform Mr. Littenberg that they needed to decide where they wanted to move as a whole; and if they voted for San Antonio, we would move forward to help them find a location here.

All were in favor of a motion to table the item until further information is provided to EDD staff on the outstanding inquiries.

Other Business

Ms. Davis informed the VAC that Matthew Polanco had forwarded a notice from the Veterans Disability Commission (VDC) who would be conducting a hearing in San Antonio the first week of March. She added that the Commission wanted the VAC's support to get the word out to all of its veteran connections. She informed the VAC that she had forwarded the distribution list to Ms. Rankin for review.

VII. Adjournment

The next meeting was scheduled for March 20, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. With no further business to discuss, Mr. Holgin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mr. Murdock. The motion was unanimously approved.

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